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LANDOWNERS AND SPORTSMEN

A growing population with more leisure time and rapid means of travel is putting an ever-increasing demand upon outdoor recreation resources. While the present population of the U.S. will almost double in 35 years, it is estimated that the demand for all forms of outdoor recreation will triple. The problem of providing recreationists a place to go is getting a lot of attention.

Each year, about the time hunting season rolls around, "No Hunting," "No Trespassing" signs begin to appear on many private landowners' property. This means that there are fewer places to go, and many sportsmen may feel that it is a transgression of their hunting rights. In most cases, however, the landowner has had a bad experience with a hunter or group of hunters and this experience has precipitated his action. If this is the case, one can hardly blame him for closing his land.

There is another side to the story, however, which should be considered. Oftentimes an incident will occur on one landowner's property and his neighbors will decide they do not want the same thing occurring on their land. Consequently, a whole area may be closed down due to the thoughtless or careless action of a hunter. The sportsmen who are conscientious and considerate of the land and the landowner may feel that this is somewhat unjustified. But here again, the landowner has the privilege to protect his property and he is not obligated to justify his actions.

There is also the case of the landowner who simply feels he does not care for people trespassing across his land, yet raises cain when wildlife populations begin to destroy his crops. In this case there is a definite need for the landowner and sportsmen to establish a rapport. Ill feelings also grow from recreationists being barred from public lands which they are entitled to use, but find the lands inaccessible because the only access lies across private roads closed to tresspass.

Several questions are often asked when the relationship of hunters and landowners comes up. One question is: How much land is under private ownership? Of Montana's approximately 93 million acres, 56 million are privately owned and controlled lands. The remaining 37 + million acres are apportioned as follows: 27 1/2 million acres are federally controlled public lands (Forest Service, BLM, etc.), 5 million acres are tax exempt Indian lands and the other 5 million acres are state lands controlled by state agencies. It can readily be seen that the majority of the state's lands are in the hands of private owners. These privately-owned acres are generally located in the most fertile and accessible areas and provide some of the finest recreational potential to be found anywhere in the United States.

Montanans are by nature friendly, easy-going people and in most cases, the landowners and sportsmen have few problems. Occasionally, however, one will crop up and ill feelings are created on both sides. As an aid in solving or as a means of preventing these problems the Montana Fish and Game Department initiated the 3-C program. The 3-C's stand for "Consideration," "Common Sense" and "Courtesy" and aims at developing a better working relationship between landowners and recreationists. The term "recreationist" is used because the program is intended to include not only hunters and fishermen, but also picnickers, campers and those who just enjoy getting out.

The Montana Stockgrowers Association has an active interest in the program and has been working closely with the Fish and Game Department so that this program may become effective. The Department and the Stockgrowers Association have prepared a pamphlet in which the 3-C program is identified and have suggested ways in which the landowner-recreationist relationships might be improved.

Exactly how does the 3-C program operate? Each of the 7 Fish and Game Districts in the state will have a 3-C team. Each team is composed of 3 members: a fish and game representative (the district information officer), one representative of the landowners, and one representative of the recreationists. When a problem occurs in a particular district these 3 men meet with the individuals concerned to see if a solution agreeable to all parties can be worked out. It is felt that by having a group for each district, problems peculiar to individual areas can be better understood by the men from that area and, hopefully, a more satisfactory agreement reached.

Because of the size and topography of the state, a wide diversity of problems might be encountered such as access to streams, rivers, lakes and government lands, trespassing, vandalism and theft, erosion because of vehicles traveling off roads, littering, posting of

state or government lands by individuals, fence cutting, fires, etc. All of the many problems could be helped by getting the 3-C team together with the individuals or groups concerned. In the future, perhaps, 3-C cooperative areas could be set up in heavy used recreation areas by sportsmen's clubs and other interested organizations. Signs might be provided for cooperative groups. Some examples of possible signs might be:

"Hunting by Permission"
3-C Cooperator, name, address
"Park in Yard"
3-C Cooperator, name, location
"Stay on Roads"
3-C Cooperator, name, location
"Fishing Access Area"
3-C Cooperator, name, location
"Hunting on Foot Only"
3-C Cooperator, name, location

Some recommended 3-C practices which sportsmen might keep in mind during the coming hunting season are:

1. Meet with the landowner before the hunting season—develop a working relationship with him. Don't expect to go out the opening morning of the season and have the run of his place.
2. Ask first if you may use the land (each and every time you go on it). Big game hunters are required by law to obtain from private landowners, lessees, or their agents, permisison to hunt on private property, but permission should be requested simply as a matter of courtesy also. Ranchers and farmers want to know who is on their land, and they have every right to know.
3. It is an unwritten rule to respect all life and property and not hunt near livestock, residences, or other buildings.
4. Leave gates the way you find them.
5. Treat the landowner's property as if it were your own—don't be a litterbug!
6. This has been an exceptionally dry year—be extremely careful with cigarettes and camp fires.
7. Always practice safe gun handling and be sure of your target before you shoot!
8. Obey fish and game regulations.

The goal of the Fish and Game Department and the 3-C program is to provide the greatest amount of outdoor recreation to the greatest number of people—recreation of both quality and quantity. To achieve this the public must be aware that it is a privilege to use private lands. Landowners who cooperate are providing a great public service to the people and to the economy of the state and nation by providing this privilege; they should be commended. The 3-C program begins and depends on the individual and, by practicing courtesy, consideration and common sense, millions of acres will be involved in a fabulous recreation program instead of an impossible recreation problem.

West Shore State Park on Flathead Lake.

WEST SHORE STATE PARK

The beautiful Mission Mountains lie across Flathead Lake to the east of "West Shore," one of the most scenic parks in the entire state parks system. The area is covered with trees, offers scenic overlooks and provides access to the lake for boating, fishing and swimming. The camping and picnic areas are small but provide a restful outdoor experience for the traveler or casual visitor.

West Shore State Park was created in 1955 by a gift of land from Mr. Doug Johns of Kalispell. Mr. Johns gave the land to the State of Montana for park purposes in memory of his father, Samuel E. Johns, a pioneer in the Flathead Valley. Samuel Johns arrived in the area during 1889 and homesteaded approximately two miles south of the park in 1898. He will be remembered for his collection of historic guns, artifacts and his recording of significan regional history. His son, Doug, carried on the tradition of the gun collection which now is housed in the Historical Library at Helena.

The park originally consisted of 68 acres lying adjacent to U.S. Highway 93 some 6 miles south of Lakeside. The area is a little rough and the camping and picnic areas have had to be worked into the terrain where opportune without scarring the site. Picnic and camping sites are located along the beach where a boat ramp has been installed to accommodate boaters that visit the park. A camping area has been located on a shelf overlooking the parking area for the boat ramp users. This location provides a beautiful overlook of Flathead Lake with the Mission Mountains across the lake as a backdrop. A trailer site is located farther to the west, away from the beach. A small picnic area is adjacent to the highway and is convenient for the casual visitor that likes to make a lunch stop.

During the summer of 1966 an ad-

ditional 73-acre tract was added to West Shore State Park. The new area is adjacent to and lies immediately north of the existing park.

This new area will provide additional camping and picnic space. More scenic overlook spots will also be available.

Under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Act, a project has been submitted for a number of improvements at West Shore. Included will be an interior road, parking improvements, additional trailer space and new latrines.

Improvements to the new area at West Shore will be included in a new project which will be submitted for approval this winter. One suggestion has been that emphasis in the new area be directed toward interpretation. This would include the possibility of an overlook building with exhibits telling the story of the Flathead area and Flathead Lake. Also included would be displays featuring the flora and fauna of the area. Nature trails would be included as a part of the interpretive program.

With the addition of the 73 acres, West Shore State Park will continue to develop into one of the finest and most scenic parks in the statewide system. Development of the interpretive program will create additional interest and provide a much needed service.

Kokanee (Sockeye Salmon) offer both conventional fishing in the summer and snagging in the Autumn.

KOKANEE SALMON

Kokanee salmon are immigrants to the waters of Montana and were first introduced into the State shortly before World War II. In general, kokanee have adapted well to a number of lakes, but not always in the way fishermen prefer. In suitable lakes with an abundant food supply the inland salmon may reach the 2 to 3 pound size; however, 12 to 15 inches (about 1 pound) is the average length of a 4 year old fish. Under poor conditions the fish may not be longer than 8 inches at that age.

Spawning is a one-shot affair. These land-locked salmon, like all their cousins of the Pacific Ocean, die after spawning. This usually occurs in the fourth year of life for kokanee, although a few may spawn in either the third or fifth year. The efficiency of kokanee in spawning sometimes creates problems of too many mouths to feed for the available food supply.

Spawning usually starts in October and can last through December; however, the bulk of the fish spawn in November. Like most other members of salmon and trout groups they bury their eggs in gravel in the presence of moving water. In Flathead Lake these spawning beds can be seen in the spring seep areas. Large numbers of the fish also move out of Flathead Lake to tributary streams to spawn.

Basic foods for this little red fish are small plants and animals called plankton. Salmon filter these organisms from the water with specially adapted gill rakes. Since kokanee are open water fish that normally find their food supply and living space in the off-shore waters, competition with other fish is usually not serious.

Togetherness seems to be the way of life for kokanee. They school up in large numbers and if you catch one in a specific area keep fishing that spot. There usually are many more close by.

In the summer kokanee prefer the waters that are about 55 degrees Farenheit. As surface waters warm they are often found at considerable depths. Frequently, schools are as deep as 50 feet in Flathead Like. Inexperienced fishermen will tend to fish the surface waters or shoal areas and end up without fish.

A unique fishery of snagging for kokanee starts on October 1 and extends to December 31 with the peak of the snagging occurring about mid-November. The success of this type of fishing depends on a large mass of spawning adults gathered in shallow water areas. Daily limits of 35 fish are the rule rather than the exception when the salmon are running.

If you are one of those fishermen who have a little trouble with these fish in the summertime, it is suggested that a leaded line will get the lure into the colder waters. One of the most successful outfits on Flathead Lake is a series of flashers (locally called Ford fenders) followed by a leader of 12 to 18 inches and a small flashing lure. Remember the mouth parts of kokanee salmon are tender and a hook will pull out very easily. Many of the better fishermen use a rubber leader that helps absorb the shock of sudden jerks.

Just as with all species of fish, kokanee can have a different rate of growth with each year. This rate of growth depends on food supply, the number of other fish, weather conditions and a number of other factors. This change in growth from year to year can be more clearly seen in a group of fish that are made up of the same age.

Considerable interest has been expressed about the difference in the size of salmon between different lakes. Also, there has been concern over the change in size of kokanee in a single lake from one year to the next. Kokanee make up about 75 percent of the number of fish caught each year in Flathead Lake. The Montana Fish and Game Department has been aware of this growth pattern of kokanee and has placed emphasis on their management for many years. Yearly variations in length and weight of kokanee were studied along with many other phases of kokanee biology.

Some interesting facts have been learned as a result of these studies. Spawning grounds have been plotted, growth data has been identified, successful methods of fishing have been studied and passed on to the public.

Kokanee are scarce in the fisherman's creel from December until April. Conversely in some Idaho lakes this is one of the best periods for salmon with jig fishing producing best. Recently, several hardy fishermen have developed early spring fishing with lures. This could increase greatly.

In 1962 and 1963 it is estimated that over 300,000 kokanee salmon were taken from Flathead Lake each year. On an acre basis this is only about three fish per surface acre. In the summer, the average fisherman catches better than one

fish per hour, while snagging will produce about two and one-half salmon per hour.

Studies reveal a difference in size during different years. Fall measurements have been made since 1955 to establish these trends. Records on size have been made back to 1951. The average size of the salmon has ups and downs ranging from 13.9 inches in 1960 to a low of 11.8 inches in 1957. Salmon in other lakes also have these ups and downs.

Average lengths in inches of male kokanee salmon for areas within Flathead Lake are:

1950	13.5
1951	13.1
1952	13.7
1954	12.9
1956	12.3
1957	11.8
1960	13.9
1962	13.3
1963	13.8

(Females also show this variation)

Each summer and fall the bulk of the catches in the fishermen's creel are composed of four-year olds. However, the three-year old fish bite on occasions and this usually leads to the opinion that "The salmon are small this year."

Salmon usually put on a tremendous growth spurt in the fourth year of life. Three-year olds are about eight to ten inches long and if they stick around one more year can be 13 to 14 inches in size.

In 1962 and 1963, length and weight measurements were recorded on about 2,000 salmon caught by fishermen. The average lengths of fish (both male and female) were as follows:

	Length in inches
May	11.0
June	11.3
July	11.5
August	11.8
September	12.4
October	12.8
November	13.3

Naturally, as the fish gained length the weight increased too.

A great deal of work has been accomplished in the past on these important fish. Much has been learned about their habits, growth, spawning and movements but much still remains to be learned.

Kokanee salmon will be one of the most important species to be studied by the department personnel on the new fishery study of Flathead Lake. Full time study on fishes of the big inland sea of Flathead Lake will cover many new aspects of the fish and their habitat. Special gear and equipment will help increase the knowledge of the salmon behavior and pinpoint new answers.

To shorten the time between bites is the aim of past, present and future inquiries on the immigrant from the Pacific Ocean. This little fish has provided tremendous recreation for Montana fishermen and their guests and with increased knowledge of its life history, the kokanee will continue to provide an excellent fishery.

NFAA—GUARANTEE

The National Field Archery Association has reminded landowners that each bow hunter who is a current member of the association carries a $100.00 guarantee. In the event a member causes damage to private property, but refuses to pay it personally, the Sportsman Guarantee covers the property of a landowner up to $100.00.

The guarantee is printed on the back of each bow hunter's card. The card is to be shown to landowners upon request.

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